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SUBJECT: INDONESIA LEG OF SECRETARY CLINTON'S ASIA TRIP -- A "SMART
POWER" TRIUMPH

11. (U) SUMMARY: During U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's inaugural trip to Asia, the Indonesia portion of her trip received overwhelmingly positive media coverage. While the Secretary held a joint press conference with the Foreign Minister, she declined traditional media interviews in favor of innovative media appearances and interaction. These included "embedding" an Indonesian blogger among her travelling press; appearing on a highly-rated, youth variety television show; and participating in a roundtable with young Indonesian journalists who had covered the U.S. elections. Hailed as both personal and groundbreaking, her unusual media appearances were a key ingredient for what made the trip to Indonesia so successful from both a substantive policy and a public diplomacy perspective. They helped reinforce her message that the U.S. is serious about developing a comprehensive partnership and using "smart power" to engage with Indonesia. END SUMMARY

Clinton Wows on "Awesome" Youth Music Program

12. (U) By far the media event with the most impact was the Secstate's appearance on a non-traditional media platform -- the "Dahsyat" ("Awesome") youth variety TV show. Broadcast on Indonesia's highest-rated national television station, the program is a daily variety/talk show. It draws an average of 4 million viewers and is very popular among young people. "Dahsyat" features musicians and celebrity guests who are interviewed by the young hosts. The show also includes performances by popular Indonesian musical groups.

13. The Secretary's interview with the show's superstar host and a popular news anchor, showcased her personal charm and also allowed her to talk policy to an audience that would not regularly watch a traditional news broadcast. Her 10-minute interview was broadcast as part of the regular 2-hour program and differed slightly in format from the regular program, with an extra host from the news bureau added. It was shown both in the morning and then again in a prime-time evening slot and achieved a record-breaking 5.9 rating, with viewership reaching a total of 42 percent of the total Indonesian television audience. RCTI TV network estimated that some 100 million viewers saw the Secretary's segment, which marked the first time an American official had appeared on the show. Both man-on-the-street and media reaction was wildly enthusiastic. Even the outspokenly anti-American, anti-globalization news magazine "Gatra" exclaimed that Clinton's appearance on the popular Indonesian music program was an "unforgettable experience" for the show's hosts and Indonesian viewers.

14. The Secretary's Jakarta TV appearance also generated extensive

U.S. network coverage. ABC, NBC, CBS, CNN and Fox all reported on Secretary Clinton's talk show visit.

Embedded Blogger

¶5. (U) For the first time ever for a VIP visit, an Indonesian blogger had behind-the-scenes access at all the photosprays, remarks and other activities of the Secretary's visit. Prominent Indonesian blogger, on-line news reporter, and Embassy International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) participant Nenden Novianti was the only local journalist embedded within SecState Clinton's traveling press during her visit to Jakarta. Using photos and video streams, Nenden was able to capture the atmosphere and special moments of the visit as they unfolded in real time giving a more creative and personal perspective to the coverage. Her coverage, which was positive in tone and in scope, resulted in nearly 80 articles and more than tripled the page-views for Nenden's column in the on-line Vivaneews.com.

¶6. (U) She wrote about wide variety of articles ranging from policy to personal and added other "color" stories on the sidelines. Highlights included her experiences on the first day, riding the bus to the airport with children from Obama's old Jakarta primary school, the Secretary's arrival at the airport and how Nenden almost missed the car to the National Archives for the Civil Society Speech. She also detailed meeting and chatting with the travelling foreign journalists.

¶7. (U) The embedded blogger helped to capture and publicize a key theme of the visit when she posted an entry stating she realized that Clinton's remarks at the Foreign Ministry, ASEAN, and the Indonesian Civil Society Dinner had one message in common: That America is ready to listen and work on concrete new programs with renewed of diplomacy. She also said that the Secretary made a strong impression on her and believes Mrs. Clinton's promise to create a better relationship and closer partnership between the U.S and Indonesia.

¶8. During the visit, Jakarta participated for the first time in "DIPNOTE," the Department's Official Blog. Ambassador Hume plus three PD officers contributed blog entries regarding the Indonesia visit. Each submission was accompanied by a photo from the trip.

Elections and Media Roundtable

¶9. (U) The third portion of The Secretary's visit to Indonesia was a roundtable with seven Indonesian journalists, most of whom had traveled to the U.S. under the Embassy-funded Emerson College program to cover the 2008 presidential elections. The roundtable was moderated by a PDOFF familiar with the journalists, and they discussed how media can be a force for better government during the Indonesian 2009 Parliamentary and Presidential elections, as well as U.S. foreign policy issues.

¶10. (U) Lasting 45 minutes, the journalists' asked about views on Gaza policy, about losing to President Obama in the election, the decision to accept President Obama's offer to become the Secretary of State, and opportunities for Indonesia's democratic development. One roundtable participant asserted that he was "thrilled" when McCain made his concession speech, but that he "cannot find something like that in Indonesia," and asked if this might happen in Indonesia some day. SecState's response was very encouraging, and lauded the rapid progress made so far with Indonesia's democratic development. Participants in the roundtable produced numerous positive stories that, in turn, generated another wave of reporting from follow on stories. Coverage made the front page of "Kompas," the country's most influential daily, and both Indonesian and English editions of "Tempo," the leading weekly news magazine.

Comment: Why Did This Work?

¶11. (U) The Secretary's people skills and policy depth came through well in these events. PAS Jakarta took existing media platforms and resources ("Dahsyat," Emerson Election Program participants, IVLP

journalist) and modified them slightly for maximum result. These events were seen as risky and out-of-the-box because they were new spins on popular and highly-rated media programs. But they also were done with interlocutors who could be trusted to work within our parameters, based on our long-standing relationships. Doing "something different" just to be different could have resulted in disaster with fewer controlled variables.

¶12. (U) Another factor in the success of media coverage for the Secstate visit was offering exclusive arrangements with existing Embassy partners in order to get better coverage. The targeted exclusive deals resulted in much more in-depth positive coverage as opposed to open, more random press conferences. The message was controlled and resonant, and other media had to rely on the coverage of those outlets permitted access. This approach served to amplify our points. The overall effect of this innovative strategy was a public diplomacy triumph for "Smart Power" and for the SecState's first visit to Indonesia.

HUME